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ABSTRACT

This monograph comprises 10 articles grouped under a single title on the following aspects of school desegregation in Delaware: (1) the true meaning of desegregation in the light of current concerns; (2) the effect on Hispanic and other students; and (3) its personal impact. The following school and community representatives contributed to the monograph: (1) Arthur W. Boswell; (2) Ben W. Ellis; (3) Mary L. Hudson; (4) Rudolph Karkosak; (5) J. J. Nuttall; (6) Cynthia E. Oates; (7) Olga Ramfrez; (8) Phillip M. Reed; (9) Bernice B. Swann; and (10) Kristen Tarbell. Also included are the following: (1) a map of school districts and enrollments; (2) a chronology of desegregation in Delaware; and (3) a 16-item selected bibliography. (BJV)

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Ten Years of Desegregation: Then and Now

The Delaware Experience

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A Title IV Office Publication
Developed and Edited by:

Horacio D. Lewis
State Supervisor
Human Relations/Title IV Projects
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The Title IV Office

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The opinions and statements published in this document are those of the writers and are not official positions of the State Board of Education or the Department of Public Instruction.

INTRODUCTION

As with any experiment, Delaware's Desegregation of schools was greeted with some apprehension in 1978. There were those who said it wouldn't work, and fought its implementation for varying reasons. Others, like myself, insisted that in order to open this society to our diverse population and create racial harmony and equal education opportunity, it was the only available approach; especially since there was very little being done with open housing.

If we compare our experiment with Boston's or Louisville's, we can only conclude that Delaware's was logistically successful -- there were few incidents of violence and we got the youngsters and their buses to and from the right school buildings. However, when we examine what may be called the software of desegregation, there is much to be done.

The challenge for the next ten years may well focus on issues such as racial tolerance and acceptance among faculty and staff; prejudice reduction; multicultural education; disparities in student achievement; self-esteem; nurturing programs; recruitment, employment and retention of minority teachers and administrators; election of minority school board members; the inclusion of Hispanics into the process; the reversal of disproportionate minority ratios in special education, suspensions, dropouts and related second generation desegregation issues. Yes, the hardware of desegregation was acceptable, but I am afraid, with some exceptions, we never really got a handle on the foregoing issues -- which will become even more important as our classrooms reflect an increasingly minority population.

This monograph, through the writings of several school and community representatives, will serve as a reference for students, educators, parents, et al. It reflects the impressions of the writers -- in the early days of desegregation and now. For instance, while some of the writers review the true meaning of desegregation in light of current concerns (Boswell, Ellis, Nuttall), others discuss its effect on Hispanic and other students (Hudson, Oates, Ramírez), and its personal impact (Karkosak, Reed, Swann, Tarbell).

Desegregation, other than being the law, is a good thing for our pluralistic society. It adds credibility to our constitution and makes us more honest with ourselves and our fellow human beings. Let us affirm and promote our unique ethnic diversity.

Horacio D. Lewis

Ten Years of Desegregation: Then and Now
The Delaware Experience

Ten Years of Desegregation: Then and Now
The Delaware Experience

by Arthur W. Boswell

Perspectives on the status of the desegregation effort in northern New Castle County's public schools are many, varied in intensity and not strictly identifiable along racial lines. Having been privileged to chair the Coalition to Save Our Children (the group representing the Wilmington plaintiff class in the court case) for a number of years, my perspective is obviously that of an advocate for Black children.

The overriding issue confronting all of us is the degree to which our public schools are effectively educating all children. The barometers of success are therefore not merely the absence of bitter racial confrontation (as accompanied desegregation in a number of communities) or the presence of additional Black children in school buildings throughout the country.

The real measures have to do with academic achievement and the degree to which young people leave school effectively prepared to contribute to an increasingly complex and technical society. On these critical measures, the great preponderance of Black children (many would argue of all children) are faring no where near as well as we know they can.

An examination of selected measures such as dropout rates, college matriculation rates, rates of assignment to special education classes, rates of subjection to disciplinary action and number leaving school with "certificates" rather than diplomas have remained fairly consistent for Black children over the years. They are dramatically overrepresented in the negative areas (dropping out, special ed. placement, "certificate" receipt, etc.) and equally underrepresented in college attendance, classes for the talented and gifted and in prepartion for the technically oriented careers of the twenty-first century.

That this condition is not unique to New Castle County comes as no surprise. In an important but as yet unpublished work entitled -- Race, Class and Education: The Politics of Second Generation Discrimination, Dr. Kenneth Meier and his associates document the impacts on Black children of court-mandated desegregation in some 174 communities across the nation.

The local condition is strikingly consistent with the national experience where, among other salient facts, board of education at-large election processes effectively preclude proportional Black representation and the advent of greatly expanded "special-education" classes coincides with the increased presence of non-White children. To those who would argue that disproportional special ed. placement (and disciplinary actions) are simply functions of the ability and behavior of Black children, Meier reports the following:

1) "[t]he use of IQ testing and related techniques . . . intensified after the Supreme Court Order of 1954 [and] Blacks consistently score lower than (W)hites of similar socioeconomic status in such tests because the tests are culturally biased"

2) " . . . research substantiates a racial bias in the discretionary power of school officials in dispensing justice. Black students are punished for offenses allowed White students or given heavier penalties for similar offenses. On the individual level . . . powerful predictors of suspensions include low grade-point average, low IQ scores as well as being male or Black"

The above citations are summary comments from a lengthy documentation of the impacts of too few Black teachers and school board members, too much "ability grouping" of Black students and too many instances of "institutional racism" prevalent throughout our educational systems. While the arguments for the presence of "second generation discrimination" are convincingly offered, it is no doubt more important to suggest remedies than to continue a debate in which perspective will likely carry more persuasive weight than "facts."

The undeniable fact, for all of us, is that the American system of public education, as presently administered, is not preparing sufficient numbers of our children for this country to remain competitive in the global economic market place. We are exposed to constant reminders, from our lost preeminence among industrialized nations to the inability of so many of our graduates to identify the Persian Gulf on a map, that serious problems abound in how we educate our young. Resolutions that fail to react to the past twenty years of educational research short-change our children -- whether they be in New Castle County or anywhere else in the country. For the one-third of our students who drop out, fail or otherwise leave school uneducated, we must do far better if we are to remain competitive in the new world economic order.

We simply have not applied what we know about educational process to our systems. We know, for example, of the critical importance of self esteem to psychological and academic development; yet we continue to segregate children in "ability grouping" contexts that risk destroying or permanently damaging self-concept.

We know that teachers must be empowered to create effective learning environments, yet we leave little room for creativity. We can find no sound pedagogical evidence for the efficiency of a system which requires retention of elementary students; yet we continue to fail K-3 students. We know of the fallacies of IQ testing -- yet we continue to depend upon those instruments as though they were magical.

We know that we live in an increasingly multicultural county, nation and world, yet "Black History" is confined to the month of February, educators remain almost totally ignorant of the African contribution to world history and culture and the Asian influence is minimized.

In sum, failed educational practices are permitted to survive (in the name of custom) as much in New Castle County as they are in most of the rest of the nation.

It should, therefore, come as no surprise that many Black parents are frustrated, so are many White parents. Until we have the courage to confront systems and demand that they reflect our best knowledge, rather than our oldest habits -- we can expect "desegregation" to be the nominal, generally resegregating process it has become.

by Ben W. Ellis

In order to properly assess the situation relative to the New Castle County desegregation case, one must clearly define just what were its original objectives. The major objective of the case focused on correcting a clearly deliberate practice of separating Blacks from whites. The court sought to reproduce the approximate racial make-up of public schools had these illegal practices not existed, thereby assuring equal access and opportunity to all. It was hoped that, as a result, equity in terms of academics would be achieved and that there would be positive social benefits as well.

Ten years later, it is apparent that the major objective of adjusting numbers has been achieved. The resulting benefits of that adjustment, however, have not yet been fully realized. Black students still lag behind whites in terms of academic achievement. It is important to note, however, that test scores for both groups have improved every year. I think that the greatest benefit in the academic arena has to do with the fact that <u>all</u> students are forced to compete in a setting which closely mirrors the real world. If one has difficulty being successful in that desegregated school setting, then that same difficulty will accompany him/her in the marketplace of society. I think that desegregation has also helped to remove stereotypes which existed on both sides. It has provided an opportunity for Black professionals to be judged on their merits and to be accepted because of their competence. On the negative side, too many Black staff members have moved on to other professions, thereby removing much needed role models for students. It would not be fair to place all the blame for this on desegregation, but it is certainly a contributing factor.

All in all, I see positive results from the desegregation effort. It has not been easy or sudden and complete success will take much more time.

by Mary L. Hudson

This essay might well be titled: "So This is Integration?" A group of urban male Hispanic students raised this issue early in the 84-85 school year, six years after court ordered desegregation. "Why can't we go to high school (Wilmington High School)?" Implied in both of these questions is the notion that if "this is integration, we don't like it."

The group's protest was mainly non-verbal. The most disruptive element consisted of rhythmical pounding on the walls beginning before homeroom. At first, staff members simply requested that the drumming cease. The typical student response was to move without argument to another place and take up the music making again. A staff member in that area would request that the students stop, they would move . . . be asked to stop . . . The tolerance of student participants and staff grew thinner and thinner.

Staff members began to ask for identification of the students during the second week of school. The drumming was so disruptive that several staff members referred students to me for disciplinary action. The group members were quickly defensive: "Why do you want my name?" "What are we doing that is so wrong?" By the third week of school, the conflict began to take on the qualities of a "we" and "they" situation.

The students' attitude toward school began to deteriorate rapidly. The administrative staff was very perplexed. Why would a group of students return so angry? What had happened between the close and opening of school? What could be done to facilitate a return to the good old days of the previous school year? How could the increasing number of suspensions be stemmed? (A majority of the male Hispanic students had been suspended at least once before the October Inservice Day.)

As the administrator of the Student Services Center serving the last third of the alphabet, I had written most of the suspensions. There are many Spanish surnames beginning with the letters O, P, Q, R, S. I sought advice, assistance and direction from several community based persons and agencies.

Though Horacio Lewis at the Department of Public Instruction responsed with the disclaimer: "I don't know what I can do" his promise to meet the students provided the basis for the group mentoring pilot program. Mr. Lewis met with the Hispanic group for four class periods. In the company of the group, he defined the problem to the administrators. To our surprise, the students told of feeling alienated, discriminated against and disrespected. This, coupled with a rising sense of Hispanic Nationalism fostered by a small increase in the number of Hispanic students in the school population, was the problem.

What should be done to alleviate the situation? Find a place for the students in the visible (high profile) activities of the school. The Hispanic group expressed a desire to display their musical (drumming) ability in a school talent show. The group's debut was at a late fall pepfest. The staff found other opportunities to showcase the talents and contributions of Hispanic students.

Mr. Lewis continued to meet with 12-15 students during the twice monthly activity period. He became their mentor, confidant, and advocate. The results were impressive. The pounding ceased. Referrals for defiance and attendance irregularities ceased. Attendance improved dramatically. No Hispanic student was suspended after December of that school year.

The mentoring program worked for these students. I remain convinced that it can work for all students and should be an integral part of the desegregation process.

by Rudolph Karkosak

When the United States District Court ordered the desegregation of New Castle County schools in 1977, it provided a year of preparation to sensitize the teachers, administrators, and parents to the events that were to follow. On one occasion, I sat in the auditorium of the since closed Brandywine Springs Junior High School and listened to a counselor from the Louisville School District who had just experienced desegregation. His first words became a permanent part of my memory. He said, "Through this desegregation order, your life will be drastically changed over the next eighteen months." He was so right; not only was my life drastically changed, but so were the lives of hundreds of teachers and thousands of people in New Castle County.

Whether one agreed with the court order or the fairness of busing, the order of the day was that the law would be followed and that it was our responsibility to carry out the ruling. To the credit of the citizens of our county, this implementation was one of the most peaceful and effective compliances in the history of desegregation. Everyone worked together to achieve the goal as quickly and efficiently as possible.

For the past twenty-four years, I have worked as a teacher and administrator in all of the secondary schools in the Wilmington feeder pattern. I can attest to the fact that this community has suffered the most upheaval of all the school communities in New Castle County. The citizens of the former Conrad Area School District and the Wilmington School District should be commended for their patience and understanding during an extremely confusing period of time.

Of all the school districts affected by the institution of the court order, Conrad and Wilmington suffered the most. Conrad High School, an institution that had served as the community school for almost fifty years, was closed in 1978. Wilmington High School was not closed, but approximately eighty percent of its students and teachers were reassigned to other high schools in the county to accommodate the prescribed racial quotas. When Wilmington High School opened in September, 1978, it housed the student and teacher populations of the recently closed Conrad High School, a few student who lived in the revised feeder pattern grids, and even fewer of its former teachers. The long standing traditions of the Wilmington Red Devils and the Conrad Redskins were merged during the summer. This was a period of adjustment and compromise. The other high schools in the county assimilated the new students into their existing environment: Wilmington High School had the more difficult task of forming a new school community.

The former Conrad High School was to become Conrad Junior High, a new school serving the populations of three closed junior high schools -- Bayard, Oak Grove and Richardson Park. The only remaining junior high school in the Conrad District was Krebs, which was closed three years later in another reorganization. Poplar Avenue, Richey, Mary C. I. Williams Elementary Schools, and later Lore Elementary School, were also closed for the sake of efficiency and fiscal management. No other area in New Castle County suffered the closing of so many of its schools in such a short period of time. If the school represents the community, these citizens not only lost their neighborhood school, but also their identity.

An excellent example of this upheaval was Conrad Junior High School. In the spring of 1978, the students from the three closed schools were notified of their new assignments. The teachers were moved with their students. When the school opened in September, only one teacher, one administrator and a few custodians had previously worked in this school. A teaching staff of 80 and a student body of eleven hundred were all new to the building. All of the furniture and equipment were removed from the building and there were no textbooks and supplies, save what we brought with us. We had little time to organize and inservice our new staff, develop a schedule for the student body, and subsequently hire an additional twenty teachers needed to properly staff the school.

Even though there was confusion, disorientation, and animosity when we opened the feeder pattern schools, parents, students, and staff collaborated to solve the many problems we faced. The dedication and hard work of all involved contributed to a positive and creative feeder pattern that represents the needs of the students and community. The high school student of today was just starting his formal education ten years ago, and is not aware of much of this history. The staff remembers and has learned from the experience. Time heals wounds, but memories persist.

by J. J. Nuttall

"We hold these truths to be self-evident:
That all men are created equal;
That they are endowed by their Creator with
certain inalienable rights,
That among these are
The right to life
Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness . . ."

Implementation of desegregation of public schools represents a partial attainment of one of the utopian, visionary committments comprising our American experiment: that of equality of opportunity. However, juxtaposed within the classic phrase above lies embedded another core value, " . . . liberty, and the pursuit of happiness . . ." Within American society, this principle has been invoked by some in the service of the "right of free association" and of "property rights"; in many communities undergoing a process of school desegregation, including New Castle County, this principle, along with a third principle fundamental to our democratic way of government -- rule by the majority of the people -- counterpoise vectors not totally congruent with full attainment of the equality provision.

In our social equation, the ongoing education policy question facing us as we wrestle with difficult implementation issues is: What relative weights should we assign to each of these competing kinetic core values? The manner in which we respond profoundly impacts the quality of our community life.

Clearly, all of us in the education community in New Castle County and Delaware can take justifiable satisfaction in our success to date in bringing about the rudimentary first phase of the school desegregation process, whereby in most cases minority and non-minority students attend the same school buildings. However, we now are involved in the arduous next phase, that of confronting and eliminating the more subtle dynamics identified as second generation discrimination. Experts on school desegregation observe that current implementation efforts encounter, not surprisingly, an intransigent complex of socioeconomic class issues enmeshed with racial factors. Clashes in the educational policy arena involve not only opposing philosophical perspectives but also in all probability arise out of differing opinions among participants as to the extent to which victory in the battle to achieve sufficient racial parity in this society can presently be pronounced. Unfortunately, while the adults continue to posture and declaim, the body count of young casualties streams out of the school system unabated.

However, the recent widespread attention to the plight of "children at risk" attests to the dawning of a new, "enlightened self-interest" in seeing that <u>all</u> children learn, even among adherents and primary beneficiaries of the educational system as presently structured.

If, we profess, we truly want all children to reach their optimal potential, or (less ambitiously) we at least expect the public educational system to prepare them to become productive, contributing members of our society, then we can no longer accept substantially lesser outcomes for large numbers of minority and lower SES youngsters. What the situation calls for, first and foremost, is a renewal of minds of those of us involved in the education enterprise. This will require discarding a persistent social Darwinian mentality in favor of a belief system that expects successful educational outcomes for all children; we can then proceed to develop appropriate implementation strategies capable of effecting these desired goals within our public schools.

What would be some of the hallmarks/characteristics of such educational programming?

1. First and foremost, committment to the principle that provided with the proper conditions, all children can learn; as a corollary, that it is the responsibility of the public education system to accomplish this expectation.

2. Celebration of cultural difference as an asset and as an opportunity, rather than perceiving such difference as deviation from the norm and/or an inherent liability. Such a transformed perspective will stand us in good stead in the immediate future, as our system will be prepared to flexibly respond to the projected increases in Hispanic, Asian, and other minorities in the public school system.

As we continue our efforts in this second phase of desegregation, our emphasis on the mechanics of attaining rudimentary physical mixing must shift towards providing the conditions for optimal educational attainment for all children. We can envision some promising innovations, conducive to such outcomes, beginning to appear in the schools:

* Increased inclusion in curricula of the contributions of non-whites in the evolution of world civilization (art, science, mathematics, etc.)
* Deployment of school social work services committed to strengthening the connections between home and school.
* Innovative programs to increase the number of minorities in the teaching profession.
* Initiatives which will enhance minority equity in school board elections and other policy-making positions within the education system.
* Exploration and pilot programming with comprehensive, system-wide reforms such as those entailed in the Coalition for Effective Schools and Outcomes-Driven Developmental Model.

For continuing inspiration in the struggle to fulfill the root values contained in our Declaration of Independence, we can nourish ourselves on these thoughts which immediately precede the committment of signatures. . .

> And for the support of this declaration
> With a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence,
> We mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

Signed: J. J. Nuttall

by Cynthia Oates

Working as a Student Relations Specialist for the past ten years, I've seen positive and negative results since desegregation began in 1978. The first year of desegregation was trying for students, parents and teachers -- we were all facing the unknown. For Black students and teachers who were to be transported to unfamiliar territory, the move was traumatic. Most were not acquainted with the names of the schools they were to report to, much less where they were located.

Black parents were apprehensive because they were no longer able to walk to the school if there was a problem, or just to see how their children were doing in school. Parents in the city were accustomed to walking into the school and talking to the principal or teachers with or without an appointment. Now they found themselves faced with transportation problems and setting up conferences with strangers.

My position as a Student Relations Specialist was necessary for the students to have someone they could feel comfortable with, one who looked like them and could understand their frustrations. We created clubs and groups especially to include the minority child. They were not joining existing extra-curricular activities offered by the schools because they didn't feel welcomed. I am pleased to say that role has now become extinct. We no longer need the "special" after-school activities.

Our schools are far from perfect. There continue to be problems concerning the number of minority students being placed in special education classes, not enough Blacks enrolled in honor classes, and a disproportionate number dropping out of school. However, I feel the attitudes of many teachers and administrators are now focusing on how to be more sensitive and receptive to the needs of all of our students.

by Olga Ramírez

In 1971, a suit was filed against the Board of Education on behalf of a group of black parents who were not satisfied with the quality of education their children were receiving in the segregated schools in Wilmington. At that time the other major minority group attending the schools in Wilmington consisted of Hispanic students, mainly from the Island of Puerto Rico, commonwealth of the U.S.A. When the ethnic background and linguistic problems of this group are taken into consideration, it is clear that they were also segregated in the Wilmington schools and that the quality of education provided them was very poor. However, the problems and concerns of Hispanics were not a part of the Desegregation Suit.

Nevertheless, when the action was won, Hispanic students were bused to the different school districts along with the black students. The school districts were unprepared to handle the many concerns of these students, their cultural and linguistic differences, and socio-economic problems.

After 10 years of desegregation there is still the perception that Hispanic students are segregated within the school districts. No one has seen a real effort by the school system to provide a positive education environment for these students.

The different districts expect the Hispanic students to adjust to the assigned feeder pattern without difficulties regardless of their cultural differences, linguistic concerns and without consideration of their socio-economic background. The negative attitudes, treatment and lack of sensitivity towards Hispanic students by the school system as a whole has contributed to the mass exodus of these students from the system.

If the school system wants to ameliorate the high dropout rate among Hispanic students, it must explore new ideas on how to provide quality education to these students to motivate them to remain in school. It must look very carefully at the negative impact of suspensions and its causes. Perhaps placing aides on buses would help curtail fighting and misbehavior which occur to and from schools, resulting in the suspension of these students. Positive goals must be set to improve the quality of life for the Hispanic student as well as for all the students in the system.

In addition, more emphasis must be put on trying to motivate students to continue their education so that they will be prepared to compete in the job market. They should not be categorized and steered only to Vocational Schools.

Therefore, if the school system really wants to provide a high level of education for all students, it must also establish adequate programs to handle the academic concerns of Hispanic students. There must be aware personnel that is willing to communicate, work and integrate these students into the school environment. As the saying goes, "Where there is a will there is a way" to deliver quality education to Hispanic students and to all students in the school system -- if a real commitment is made.

by Phillip M. Reed

As I reflect on ten years of Desegregation in New Castle County, there are two events that stand out in my mind. The first was triggered by an invitation to attend a P.T.A. Officers' Executive Committee meeting in the spring of 1978. This Committee, which represented our proposed feeder school promised me a brief agenda.

I arrived before a packed house of two-to-three hundred parents and teachers and quickly realized that "I" was the agenda. After responding to questions for what seemed like hours, I'm convinced, in retrospect, the experience was a blessing in disguise and the beginning of mutual respect and reciprocal support that would last ten years. I recall suggesting to the audience that evening that the students would lift us up, place us on their shoulders, and carry us through.

As I focus on the second incident, the 1978 teacher's strike which began shortly after the opening of school in September, this is exactly what happened. During the entire time period, we at Lewis Elementary School averaged 360 students, daily, out of a population of approximately 500. Circumstances being as they were, I had the privilege and the responsibility of greeting these youngsters as they arrived each day and in escorting them out at dismissal. These procedures, coupled with frequent reassuring visits to each classroom, afforded me early opportunities to identify each student individually. The healthy mixture of students and the use of staff members across areas of certification, facilitated interactions and promoted understandings. This was demonstrated in very obvious fashion during a culminating student assembly program in October of that year. Mrs. Haydee Egan, Bilingual Education Support Teacher, had quietly taught her heterogenous group of first grade students a series of words, phrases, and numbers in Spanish and treated us, and a nucleus of parents, to a delightful presentation.

The benefit of this experience, under fairly adverse conditions, was reflected in the eyes of the children and through the warmly demonstrated expressions of the parents. In my judgement, this was the launching pad for ten successful years of Desegregation at Wm. C. Lewis Elementary School. The youngsters literally "lifted us up, placed us on their shoulders, and carried us through."

by Bernice B. Swann

The past ten years of desegregation here in northern Delaware brings to mind familiar scenes from my childhood. The year was 1952 and to attend "racially" segregated schools in southern Delaware was the law. So for six years, my school bus loaded with black youngsters passed many more school buses full of white children on our ways to separate schools. We rode past the all white section of town to

arrive at our modern, modest size school, a place our community widely respected and supported. The teachers there were more than pedagogues; they were extended family.

Six years later, change was rumored to take place throughout lower Delaware -- integration it was called. Now black children would be allowed to go to that big three story school for white people across town and the white people soon would be coming to our school. Interestingly enough, only one black family that year sent a child to the white people's school. The rest of us wanted no part of the foreign, alien thing. Two years passed and a few more black children integrated our town's white school, but no white children yet attended ours.

Then, I was entering high school and I rejected the white high school nearer my home for the all black high school, in my opinion superior to all, in a neighboring town. My bias about my favored high school became fact to me. Surely, no white school could offer as much excitement as our black faculty and administration, black band, black choir, black majorettes, black cheerleaders, black sports teams, black queens, black student organizations, and black plays -- all black and all beautiful and all witnessing what my people in great numbers could accomplish.

It all changed though. White people refused to integrate traditionally black schools. Instead, they closed them. If they were re-opened, white people replaced our black administration, and black teachers were displaced and dispersed; their numbers now trickled through mostly white populated corridors and classrooms.

Even the names of black heroes given to our schools were removed. By this time, I was to enter college and I embraced the state's only historically black institution where I received a quality education and a sense of identity. After graduation, when I began my teaching career, I found segregation once again in our state's largest city, but I loved that environment, the place where I lived, worked, and made a positive difference.

The haunting thing returned though, this time disguised as desegregation. Its familiar empty promises -- better education, more jobs, advancement opportunities, equality, were still there. No, I kept warning my district and colleagues. Few benefits are in it for us. The white people will now have their way with our future. They will control and benefit from us. I know. I experienced this twenty years ago! But they didn't listen. I guess they looked forward to progress. Everywhere is a sense of accomplishment and a gnawing sense of loss.

Ironically, today, my oldest daughter, having experienced being a minority among the majority in a desegregated northern Delaware high school now proudly anticipates her intentions of going to a traditionally black college where she, too, can enjoy a sense of power and worth among her own majority. I understand her need.

Since desegregation we all have gained much, but we have lost much, too. These next ten years may yet afford us opportunity to satisfy not only the intellectual side, but the personal, unique self of every individual in our schools.

by Kristen Tarbell

It has been ten years since the courts of The United States stated that northern New Castle County must abolish racially identifiable schools. Now questions are arising: Did integration ever really happen? Should we try again? Are all the goals of desegregation being reached?

I was in kindergarten when racially identifiable schools ended; I can't remember school any other way. I and most of the other students going to such schools have hardly even heard about many of the blind prejudices that occurred before programs like desegregation. Not only that, but on the average, I feel people of my generation are less prejudiced than my parents' generation. To think of specific examples of desegregation working in schools is hard for me because I take many of these things for granted. The sports teams at A.I. have different races on them, and they work and do well together. Anyone can walk down the hall, peer into classrooms, and see blacks, whites, Asians, and Hispanics learning together. At lunch, a free choice situation, different races have the option of getting to know one another. Many of them do this. During the changing of classes, another time where the students choose whom they associate with, you see races mixing and mingling, walking together as friends. Yes, I think desegregation is working.

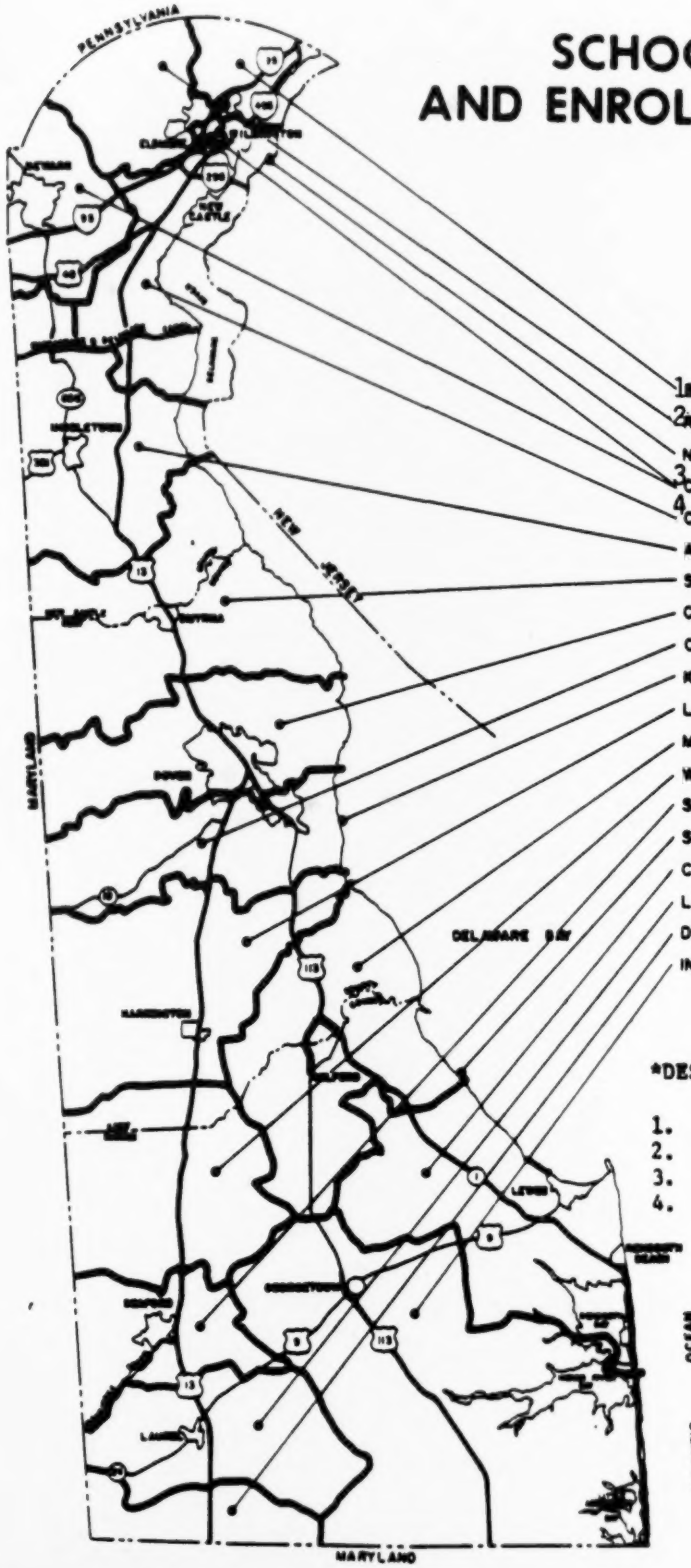
After ten years the State Board of Education is now stating that Red Clay Consolidated School District has not lived up to the federal court ruling. They specifically point out the discrepancy in the percentages of minorities in Wilmington High School and Alexis I. duPont High School. I think the problem comes down to the difference between desegregation and integration. Federal law can mandate desegregation; the State Board can administer it. But no one can administer or mandate integration. Integration occurs when two groups, whether they be racial, social, or otherwise, accept one another as equals, both consciously and unconsciously. What the State Board is trying to do is integrate the different races more than they are now. This is something that can only occur in the minds and the hearts of the individuals who are involved. Changing the schools around to get a different, slightly better ratio of minorities will not significantly alter integration. The courts have already set up the environment for integration; now it is up to the students.

School Districts and Enrollments

Chronology

Bibliography

SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND ENROLLMENTS 1987-1988



1. BRANDYWINE — 11,382
2. RED CLAY CONSOLIDATED — 14,189
3. NEW CASTLE COUNTY VO-TECH — 3,276
4. CHRISTINA — 16,436
5. COLONIAL — 9,351
6. APPOQUINIMINK — 2,189
7. SMYRNA — 2,866
8. CAPITAL — 5,991
9. CAESAR RODNEY — 6,273
10. KENT COUNTY VO-TECH — 717
11. LAKE FOREST — 3,188
12. MILFORD — 3,321
13. WOODBRIDGE — 1,862
14. SEAFORD — 3,289
15. SUSSEX COUNTY VO-TECH — 979
16. CAPE HENLOPEN — 3,489
17. LAUREL — 1,867
18. DELMAR — 579
19. INDIAN RIVER — 6,289

*DESEGREGATING DISTRICTS

1. (2.7% Black/.83% Hispanic)
2. (28.40% Black/7.58% Hispanic)
3. (26.81% Black/1.93% Hispanic)
4. (29.12% Black/1.47% Hispanic)

N

MILES

SOURCE: DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, AUXILIARY SERVICE BRANCH.

DESEGREGATION CHRONOLOGY

1868 — 14th AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION -- "No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States . . . without due process of law nor deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law."

1896 — PLESSY v. FERGUSON -- United States Supreme Court states "separate but equal" satisfies the Constitutitonal requirements of the equal protection clause. This case involved a man who was 7/8 white and 1/8 black, who had been excluded from an all-white dining car on a Louisiana train.

1897 — ARTICLE X, DELAWARE CONSTITUTION -- Institutes segregated public school system in Delaware.

1952 — BELTON v. GEBHART and BULAH v. GEBHART -- Chancellor Collins Seitz rules that the existing educational facilities for the black and white students are not equivalent and orders immediate admission of black children to Claymont and Hockessin schools. These cases were later incorporated in the Brown decisions.

1954 — BROWN v. BOARD OF EDUCATION OF TOPEKA (Kansas) -- Brown I -- The United States Supreme Court declares the "separate but equal" principle unconsitutitonal and orders schools desegregated.

1955 — -- Brown II -- The Court affirms Brown I and orders that schools be desegregated with all deliberate speed.

1956 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN initially filed in District Court by residents of Clayton, Delaware. Court enjoined the district to admit black students. In a continuation of the suit filed in 1957, 7 cases were consolidated for trial. In 1961, District Court Judge Caleb Wright issued the order approving, with modification, the plan presented by the State Board of Education.

1964 — CIVIL RIGHTS ACT -- Congress passed law aimed at ending discrimination against minority groups. It provides measures for ensuring equal rights for all Americans to vote, work, use public accommodations and facilities, public education and program receiving federal funds.

1965 — DELAWARE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION -- Board adopts resolution to end "de jure" (mandated by law) segregation. By 1967 last black school district is phased out.

1968 — EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT ACT -- Delaware State Legislature establishes framework for reorganization of Delaware schools. Wilmington School District is excluded from parts of this Act.

1968 GREEN v. BOARD OF EDUCATION OF KENT COUNTY (Virginia) -- Supreme Court unanimously decides that "freedom of choice" is not adequate in this case.

1971 EVANS v. BUCHANAN reopened by 5 black parents from Wilmington. Plaintiffs contend that Wilmington schools have not been desegregated and that the Educational Advancement Act violated their Consitututional rights under the 14th Amendment.

1971 SWANN v. CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG BOARD OF EDUCATION (North Carolina) -- Supreme Court adopts "tools" for achieving desegregation. Mandatory busing authorized among other means.

1973 KEYS v. SCHOOL DISTRICT #1 (Denver, Colorado) - First case in which Supreme Court orders a remedy for "de facto" segregation. -- A new interpretation of "dual" segregation is set forth which states that where intentional segregation has been proven in a "substantial" part of a school district, a legal presumption is created that the whole district is a "dual" school system. -- The first Northern city ordered desegregated by the Supreme Court.

1974 July 12 EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- District Court concludes that a unitary school system has not been established and requires Defendant State Board of Education to submit "alternate desegregation plans (a) within the present boundaries of the Wilmington School District, and (b) incorporating other areas of New Castle County. The plaintiffs may also submit alternative desegregation plans."

1974 July 25 MILLIKEN v. BRADLEY (Detroit, Michigan) -- Supreme Court concludes "it must be shown that racially discriminatory acts of the state or local school districts, or of a single school district have been a substantial cause of inter-district segregation" in order for an inter-district remedy to be imposed.

1975 Mar. 27 EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- District Court affirms its 1974 ruling and declares part of the Educational Advancement Act unconstitutional. It again orders that remedies be submitted in accordance with the initial ruling.

1975 Apr. 16 EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- The order is rendered by District Court, based on its 1974 and 1975 rulings. The order again requires the parties to submit both inter-district and "Wilmington only" plans and enjoins the State Board of Education, in preparing its inter-district plans, from relying upon those provisions of the Educational Advancement Act which had been found to be unconstitutional.

1975 Nov. 17 BUCHANAN v. EVANS -- Supreme Court summarily affirms the District Court ruling, stating: "The judgment is affirmed."

1976 Jan. 19 — BUCHANAN v. EVANS -- Supreme Court denies a State Board of Education petition for a new hearing.

1976 May 19 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- District Court renders opinion, reiterating its finding of an inter-district violation and thus includes 10 suburban districts in the remedy. Opinion states that the Court will consider any school whose enrollments in each grade range between 10 and 35% black to be prima facie desegregated. A two-step phase-in is established, beginning with the secondary schools in September 1977 and the elementary schools in September 1978.

1976 June 7 — WASHINGTON v. DAVIS (District of Columbia) -- Supreme Court rules that plaintiffs in civil rights cases must prove a "racially discriminatory purpose" on the part of the officials and may not rest their case merely on disproportionate racial impact.

1976 June 15 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- District Court orders desegregation and reorganization of 11 school districts in New Castle County in compliance with the May 19 opinion.

1976 Nov. 29 — BUCHANAN v. EVANS -- Supreme Court refuses to hear appeal, stating "The appeals are dismissed for want of jurisdiction."

1976 Dec. 6 — AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT v. UNITED STATES (Texas) -- Supreme Court vacates the desegregation order of the Fifth Circuit Court and sent the case back to the lower court for further review in light of Washington v. Davis.

1976 Dec. 28 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- District Court refuses a request for a stay of the order.

1977 Jan. 11 — VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS v. METROPOLITAN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORP. (Illinois) -- Supreme Court rules that communities do not have to make allowances for integration unless there is proof of purposeful racial discrimination.

1977 Jan. 25 — UNITED STATES v. BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS OF CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS -- Supreme Court strikes down a Federal Court's inter-district plan and orders Seventh Circuit Court to reconsider in light of Arlington Heights and Washington v. Davis.

1977 May 5 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- District Court again refuses a request for a stay of the order.

1977 May 18 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- Third Circuit Court of Appeals affirms District Court Judgment of June 15, 1976, with modifications.

1977 May 19 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- Third Circuit Court of Appeals dismisses a previous request for a stay of the District Court order, stating that the delay request was made moot by their May 18 ruling.

1977 June 27 — DETROIT -- Supreme Court upheld lower court plan for school desegregation in Detroit and issued judgment requiring Michigan to pay part of the cost of the remedial programs called for in the plan.

1977 June 27 — DAYTON -- Supreme Court found the plan too broad in light of the scope of the constitutional violations cited and ordered lower court to seek additional evidence concerning "intent." Also ordered district to continue current plan while lower court works out more limited plan.

1977 June 29 — MILWAUKEE and OMAHA -- Supreme Court nullified rulings that these school systems intentionally maintained racial segregation and sent the cases back to lower courts for reconsideration.

1977 Aug. 5 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- District Court Judge Murray M. Schwartz issued an Opinion and Order denying the State Board plan for "one way" busing, staying implementation of school desegregation until the Supreme Court rules on a writ of certiorari, ordering appointment of a New Board of five members which shall file a plan for a unitary desegregated school system with the Court by September 30, 1977, and which shall report its progress to the Court every two weeks, beginning August 19, 1977.

1977 Oct. 3 — BUCHANAN v. EVANS -- Supreme Court denied petition for writ of certiorari.

1977 Nov. 7 — BUCHANAN v. EVANS -- Supreme Court denied petition for rehearing of its denial of writ of certiorari of October 3, 1977.

1977 Nov. 8 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- Judge Schwartz stayed implementation until September, 1978.

1977 Dec. 12 — LANSING, MICHIGAN -- Supreme Court, without comment, refused to hear an appeal concerning desegregation of schools, thereby letting stand the lower courts' desegregation order which resulted in the busing of 2,400 elementary pupils in grades 1-6.

1978 Jan. 9 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- Judge Schwartz issued Order utilizing a "9-3" plan. The maximum tax rate was set at $2.23/$100 of assessed valuation ($1.91 current operating expense, $.24 debt service, $.05 Tuition Charges, and $.03 Minor Capital Expenses). Ancillary relief programs were ordered as was inclusion of assignment of Hispanic population so as to continue the Bilingual program.

1978 Jan. 20 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- Judge Schwartz issued Opinion and Order modifying January 9 decision in that it clarified the State funding requirement of the January 9 ruling.

1978 Feb. 27 — LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY -- Supreme Court, without comment, denied an appeal by Kentucky Governor Julian Carroll seeking permission to ask for federal help in paying for busing in the Louisville area. The effect of this decision was to leave in place a lower court ruling which prevented the State of Kentucky from denying bus operation and purchasing funds for Louisville, Jefferson County schools.

1978 Apr. 28 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- Judge Schwartz issued Order requiring State Board of Education to execute purchase orders by May 1 for 142 school buses.

1978 May 5 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- Judge Schwartz entered Order denying State Board of Education's motion for injunction of tax rate for current operating expenses in excess of $1.585.

1978 June 28 — BAKKE CASE -- Supreme Court upheld the principle of affirmative action to overcome past discrimination but at the same time held invalid the University of California, at Davis, medical school's particular plan which utilized quotas.

1978 July 24 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- Third Circuit Court of Appeals issued Judgment affirming District Court's rulings of August 7, 1977, and January 9 and 20, 1978 in entirety except that Judge Schwartz was ordered to hold hearings on the tax issue.

1978 July 26 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- Judge Schwartz vacated the District Court's Order of May 5 and ordered the New Castle County Board of Education to set the tax rate for current operating expenses at $1.585 until further Order of the Court. This amounts to a total school tax rate of $1.875.)

1978 Aug. 11 — COLUMBUS, OHIO -- Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist temporarily stayed the desegregation order of the lower courts which was to be implemented September 7, 1978. Justice Rehnquist found the remedy exceed the violation. Approximately 37,000 of the district's 89,000 students were to be bused. The NAACP petitioned the Supreme Court to set aside Justice Rehnquist's stay; the petition was denied.

1980 July 8 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- Senate Bill 593 authorizes the State Board of Education to reorganize the New Castle County School District into smaller districts.

1981 June 2 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- Judge Schwartz approves State Board of Education's four-district plan.

1981 July 1 — EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- Four districts emerge: Brandywine, Christina, Colonial and Red Clay Consolidated. The bilingual education program for Hispanics is again incorporated into the process.

1988 Aug. 24 EVANS v. BUCHANAN -- The State Board votes to ask Judge Schwartz to release Brandywine, Christina and Colonial School Districts from the desegregation order. The State Board asks Red Clay to correct racial percentages in two of its high schools.

(Editor's Note: Unlike Delaware's case against the state board of education, most desegregation suits are filed against a city or county school board. Delaware's city - suburban remedy helped to break new ground as well.)

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